

A Chewing Noise

By HENRY J. TAYLOR



ARTHUR SCHLESINGER JR., has proved again how sad an error it is to give one's confidence to the wrong man; there is simply a small chewing noise, as when the cat reaches the backbone of a mouse. And when Prof. Schlesinger cut the throat of Dean Rusk in the dead President's name, ah, this was pure Schlesinger. But is it history?

It would be one thing if you could just dismiss Prof. Schlesinger as a coattail rider, arrogant but sycophantic, ambitious but susceptible. That seems to be the reaction among outraged Rusk defenders in Congress. But it is Prof. Schlesinger's calculated pretenses in presenting himself as a historian that should lead the parade of objections.

History pushed too far toward sociology (a constant Schlesinger trick), like a sociology pushed too far toward history, contains an inherent dishonesty. The best history is that in which no element of self-interest, extremism or bias appears. Yet, writing as a historian and reviewer, listen to Dr. Schlesinger's olympian detachment in commenting (Sept. 27, 1964) on Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

He describes Gen. MacArthur as "wearing his patriotism on his sleeve," charges him with "messianism and paranoia," no less, and speaks with contempt of his "ham eloquence" and "overwritten Confederate prose."

At some point, facts also claim a place. Said Bernard M. Baruch: "Every man has a right to his own opinion, but no man has a right to be wrong in his facts."

I have direct, personal knowledge of only two things in the magazine excerpt from Prof. Schlesinger's forthcoming book, but in those his record is 100 per cent. Both are wrong.

One is his reference to clarifying the status of ambassadors. Prof. Schlesinger states, for the purpose of showing great improvement, that "Kennedy's circular letter to U. S. ambassadors in May 1961 gave them (he emphasizes 'for the first time') the authority 'to oversee and co-ordinate all the activities of the U. S. Government in their countries.'"

Actually, the clarification was issued years ago by President Eisenhower, was famous in the State Department, and was part of each Chief of Mission's reading file when he took up his post.

It included: "An American ambassador is the commanding officer and everyone stationed in the country is under him," etc., etc. It then ordered the multiple-agency subordination to him that Prof. Schlesinger misdates, attributes erroneously and calls a new "first step."

Next, Prof. Schlesinger neglects to state that Secretary of State John Foster Dulles had great respect for Dean Rusk.

Here historian Schlesinger relies entirely on the reader's forgetfulness of the public record when he castigates "the readiness of Dulles to yield up foreign service officers to McCarthyism." But Ambassador Charles E. Bohlen, often praised in the articles and a foreign service officer prominently involved, owes it to John Foster Dulles to repudiate Prof. Schlesinger in print, and fast.

Secretary Dulles, himself, selected Mr. Bohlen to be Ambassador to the USSR. President Eisenhower approved it. But Mr. Bohlen's defense of the fateful Yalta agreements (he had been President Roosevelt's interpreter) created an uproar, and intense Republican opposition in the Senate.

Secretary Dulles told powerful Senate Majority Leader Robert A. Taft that Mr. Bohlen was the best qualified man. He persuaded Sen. Taft to beat down the opposition of Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy and many others. Thru Sen. Taft, Mr. Dulles pushed Mr. Bohlen's nomination thru by a vote of 74 to 13. Battling Sen. McCarthy and battling for the Foreign Service, Secretary Dulles put his neck on

the block for Mr. Bohlen.

Again, what Dr. Schlesinger has written is both unjust and untrue.